Tafsir Ibn Kathir

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah

Al-`Abasa

Revealed in Makkah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى

80:1 He frowned and turned away.

أَن جَآءَهُ الاٌّعْمَى

80:2 Because there came to him the blind man.

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى

80:3 And how can you know that he might become pure.

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى

80:4 Or he might receive admonition, and the admonition might profit him.

أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَى

80:5 As for him who thinks himself self-sufficient,

فَأَنتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى

80:6 To him you attend;

وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلاَّ يَزَّكَّى

80:7 What does it matter to you if he will not become pure.

وَأَمَّا مَن جَآءَكَ يَسْعَى

80:8 But as for him who came to you running,

وَهُوَ يَخْشَى

80:9 And is afraid.

فَأَنتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى

80:10 Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another.

كَلاَّ إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ

80:11 Nay; indeed it is an admonition.

فَمَن شَآءَ ذَكَرَهُ

80:12 So, whoever wills, let him pay attention to Him (it).

فَى صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ

80:13 In Records held in honor,

مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ

80:14 Exalted, purified.

بِأَيْدِى سَفَرَةٍ

80:15 In the hands of ambassadors (Safarah),)

كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ

80:16 Honorable and obedient.

The Prophet being reprimanded because He frowned at a Weak Man

More than one of the scholars of Tafsir mentioned that one day the Messenger of Allah was addressing one of the great leaders of the Quraysh while hoping that he would accept Islam. While he was speaking in direct conversation with him, Ibn Umm Maktum came to him, and he was of those who had accepted Islam in its earliest days. He (Ibn Umm Maktum) then began asking the Messenger of Allah about something, urgently beseeching him. The Prophet hoped that the man would be guided, so he asked Ibn Umm Maktum to wait for a moment so he could complete his conversation. He frowned in the face of Ibn Umm Maktum and turned away from him in order to face the other man. Thus, Allah revealed,

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (١)

أَن جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى (٢)

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى (٣)

> He frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man. And how can you know that he might become pure?
>
> > meaning, he may attain purification and cleanliness in his soul.

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى (٤)

Or he might receive admonition, and the admonition might profit him?

meaning, he may receive admonition and abstain from the forbidden.

أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَى (٥)

فَأَنتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى (٦)

As for him who thinks himself self-sufficient. To him you attend;

meaning, `you face the rich person so that perhaps he may be guided.'

وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّى (٧)

What does it matter to you if he will not become pure?

meaning, `you are not responsible for him if he does not attain purification.'

وَأَمَّا مَن جَاءكَ يَسْعَى (٨)

وَهُوَ يَخْشَى (٩)

But as for him who came to you running. And is afraid.

meaning, `he is seeking you and he comes to you so that he may be guided by what you say to him.'

فَأَنتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى (١٠)

Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another.

meaning, `you are too busy.'

Here Allah commands His Messenger to not single anyone out with the warning. Rather, he should equal warn the noble and the weak, the poor and the rich, the master and the slave, the men and the women, the young and the old. Then Allah will guide whomever He chooses to a path that is straight. He has the profound wisdom and the decisive proof.

Abu Ya`la and Ibn Jarir both recorded from Aishah that she said about, عَبَسَ وتَوَلَّى (He frowned and turned away), "was revealed.''

At-Tirmidhi recorded this Hadith but he did not mention that it was narrated by Aishah.

I say it is reported like this in Al-Muwatta' as well.

The Characteristics of the Qur'an

Allah says,

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ (١١)

Nay; indeed it is an admonition.

meaning, this Surah, or this advice in conveying knowledge equally among people, whether they are of noble or low class.

Qatadah and As-Suddi both said, كَلاَّ إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ "This means the Qur'an.''

فَمَن شَاء ذَكَرَهُ (١٢)

So, whoever wills, let him pay attention to Him (it).

meaning, so whoever wills, he remembers Allah in all of his affairs.

The pronoun could also be understood to be referring to the revelation since the conversation is alluding to it.

Allah said:

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ (١٣)

مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ (١٤)

In Records held in honor, exalted, purified.

meaning, this Surah or this admonition. Both meanings are connected to each other. Actually, all

of the Qur'an is in honored pages, meaning respected and revered.

مَّرْفُوعَةٍ

exalted,

meaning, elevated in status.

مُّطَهَّرَةٍ

purified,

meaning, from impurity, additions and deficiency.

Concerning Allah's statement,

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ (١٥)

In the hands of ambassadors **(Safarah)**,

Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Ad-Dahhak, and Ibn Zayd, all said,

"These are the angels.''

Al-Bukhari said,

"**Safarah** (ambassadors) refers to the angels. They travel around rectifying matters between themselves. The angels when they descend with the revelation of Allah, bringing it like the ambassador who rectifies matters between people.''

Allah said,

كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (١٦)

Honorable and obedient.

meaning, they are noble, handsome, and honorable in their creation. Their character and their deeds are righteous, pure and perfect.

Here it should be noted that it is necessary for one who carries the Qur'an (i.e., the angel) to be following righteousness and guidance.

Imam Ahmad recorded from Aishah that the Messenger of Allah said,

الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَهُوَ مَاهِرٌ بِهِ، مَعَ السَّفَرَةِ الْكِرَامِ الْبَرَرَةِ،
وَالَّذِي يَقْرَؤُهُ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ شَاقٌّ، لَهُ أَجْرَانِ

> He who recites the Qur'an proficiently, will be with the noble, righteous, ambassador angels, and the one who recites it with difficulty will receive two rewards.

This Hadith was reported by the group.

قُتِلَ الإِنسَـنُ مَآ أَكْفَرَهُ

80:17 Qutila mankind! How ungrateful he is!

مِنْ أَىِّ شَىْءٍ خَلَقَهُ

80:18 From what thing did He create him.

مِن نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ

80:19 From a Nutfah He created him and then set him in due proportion.

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ

80:20 Then He made the path easy for him.

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ

80:21 Then He causes him to die and puts him in his grave.

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَآءَ أَنشَرَهُ

80:22 Then when it is His will, He will resurrect him.

كَلاَّ لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَآ أَمَرَهُ

80:23 Nay, but has not done what He commanded him.

فَلْيَنظُرِ الإِنسَـنُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ

80:24 Then let man look at his food:

أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَآءَ صَبّاً

80:25 We pour forth water in abundance.

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الاٌّرْضَ شَقّاً

80:26 And We split the earth in clefts.

فَأَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبّاً

80:27 And We cause therein Habb to grow,

وَعِنَباً وَقَضْباً

80:28 And grapes and Qadb,

وَزَيْتُوناً وَنَخْلاً

80:29 And olives and date palms,

وَحَدَآئِقَ غُلْباً

80:30 And Ghulb Hada'iq,

وَفَـكِهَةً وَأَبّاً

80:31 And fruits (Fakihah) and herbage (Abb).

مَّتَـعاً لَّكُمْ وَلاًّنْعَـمِكُمْ

80:32 A provision and benefit for you and your cattle.

The Refutation against Whoever denies Life after Death

Allah rebukes those who deny the Resurrection and the Final Gathering.

قُتِلَ الْإِنسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ (١٧)

Qutila mankind! How ungrateful he is!

Ad-Dahhak reported from Ibn Abbas that he said, (قُتِلَ الْإِنسَانُ Qutila mankind!)

"May man be cursed.''

Abu Malik also made a similar statement. He said,

"This refers to the rejecting type of man, due to his abundant denial without any supporting argument. Rather he denies simply because he thinks it is farfetched and because he lacks knowledge of it.''

Ibn Jurayj said, مَآ أَكْفَرَهُ How ungrateful he is!

"This means none is worse in disbelief than he is.''

Qatadah said, مَآ أَكْفَرَهُ How ungrateful he is!

"This means none is more cursed than he is.''

Then Allah explains how He created him from something despised and that He is able to bring him back to life just as He created him initially.

Allah says,

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ (١٨)

مِن نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ (١٩)

From what thing did He create him From a Nutfah He created him, and then set him in due proportion.

meaning, He decreed his life span, his sustenance, his deeds, and whether he would be miserable or happy.

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ (٢٠)

Then He made the path easy for him.

Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas,

"Then He made his coming out of his mother's belly easy for him.''

This was also said by Ikrimah, Ad-Dahhak, Abu Salih, Qatadah, As-Suddi, and it was the explanation preferred by Ibn Jarir.

Mujahid said, "This is similar to Allah's statement,

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَـهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِراً وَإِمَّا كَفُوراً

Verily, We guided him on the path, he is either grateful or ungrateful. (76:3)

meaning, We explained it to him, clarified it, and made it easy for him to act upon.''

Al-Hasan and Ibn Zayd both said the same.

This is the most correct view and Allah knows best.

Concerning Allah's statement,

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ (٢١)

Then He causes him to die and puts him in his grave.

After creating man, Allah causes him to die and makes him the inhabitant of a grave.

Allah said;

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنشَرَهُ (٢٢)

Then when it is His will, He will resurrect him.

meaning, He resurrects him after his death and this is called **Al-Ba`th** (resurrection) and **An-Nushur** (resuscitation).

وَمِنْ ءَايَـتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَآ أَنتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنتَشِرُونَ

And among His signs is this that He created you from dust, and then behold, you are human beings scattered. (30:20)

وَانظُرْ إِلَى العِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا

And look at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh. (2:259)

In the Two Sahihs it is narrated by way of Al-A`mash from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet said,

كُلُّ ابْنِ آدَمَ يَبْلَى إِلَّا عَجْبَ الذَّنَبِ، مِنْهُ خُلِقَ، وَفِيهِ يُرَكَّب

All of the Sons of Adam (men) will decay except for the bone of coccyx (tailbone). From it he (man) was created and by it he will be reconstructed.''

Concerning Allah's statement,

كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ (٢٣)

Nay, but has not done what He commanded him.

Ibn Jarir said,

"Allah is saying, `Nay, the matter is not as this disbelieving man says. He claims that he has fulfilled Allah's right upon him regarding himself and his wealth. لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَآ أَمَرَهُ But he has not done what He commanded him.

Allah is saying that man has not fulfilled for his Lord the obligations that were imposed upon him.''

What seems apparent to me of its actual meaning -- and Allah knows best -- is that the Ayah

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَآءَ أَنشَرَهُ

Then when it is His will, He will resurrect him.

means, He will resurrect him.

كَلاَّ لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَآ أَمَرَهُ

Nay! But he has not done what He commanded him.

> means, He has not done it (resurrected them) as of yet, until the time period has expired and the extent of the earthly life of humanity is complete, according to the lives of all whom Allah has written it to exist from the time they are brought into existence into the world. Verily, Allah has decreed the existence of mankind, and its duration, therefore, when that is finished with Allah, He resurrects the creatures and repeats their creation just as He initially created them.

The Growth of the Seed and Other Things is a Proof of Life after Death

Then Allah says;

فَلْيَنظُرِ الْإِنسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ (٢٤)

Then let man look at his food?

This is a call to reflect upon Allah's favor.

> It also contains an evidence in the vegetation's coming to life from the lifeless earth, that the bodies can be brought to life after being decayed bones and scattered dust.

أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاء صَبًّا (٢٥)

We pour forth water in abundance.

meaning, `We sent it down from the sky to the earth.'

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا (٢٦)

And We split the earth in clefts.

> meaning, `We cause it (the water) to settle in it (the earth), and it enters into its boundaries, and mingles with the parts of the seeds that are left in the earth. From this the seeds grow, rise up and appear on the surface of the earth (in the form of vegetation).'

فَأَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا (٢٧)

وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا (٢٨)

And We cause therein **Habb** to grow. And grapes and **Qadb**,

> **- Al-Habb** refers to all types of seeds (or grains).
>
> - Grapes are well-known.
>
> **- Al-Qadb** are the moist (green) herbal plants that animals graze on. It is also called **Al-Qat**.

Ibn `Abbas, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak and As-Suddi, all said this.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "**Al-Qadb** is fodder.''

وَزَيْتُونًا ...

And olives,

> It is well-known, and it is a food just as its juice is a food. It is eaten for breakfast and used as an oil.

... وَنَخْلًا (٢٩)

And date palms,

> It (i.e., its fruit) is eaten as **Balah**, **Busr**, **Rutab** and **Tamr**, **Niya**' and **Matbukh**, all of which are varieties of dates that range from unripe, ripe and dried in their textures.

Its juice is also extracted to make pulpy fruit drinks and vinegar.

وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا (٣٠)

And **Ghulb Hada'iq**,

meaning, gardens.

Al-Hasan and Qatadah both said,

"**Ghulb** are gardens of date palms that are thick and handsome.''

Ibn Abbas and Mujahid both said,

"It means everything that is gathered and collected.''

Allah said,

وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا (٣١)

And fruits **(Fakihah)** and herbage **(Abb)**.

Fakihah includes every type of fruit.

Ibn Abbas said,

- "**Al-Fakihah** is everything that is eaten ripe, and

- **Al-Abb** is what the earth grows that is eaten by grazing animals and not people.''

In one narration reported from him he said,

"It is the grass for the livestock animals.''

Abu `Ubayd Al-Qasim bin Sallam reported from Ibrahim At-Taymi that he said,

"Abu Bakr As-Siddiq was asked about Allah's statement, وَفَكِهَةً وَأَبّاً (And fruits **(Fakihah)** and herbage **(Abb)**. and he said,

`What sky would shade me and what earth would carry me if I said about the Book of Allah that which I did not have knowledge of.' ''

In reference to what Ibn Jarir recorded from Anas, that he said,

> "Umar bin Al-Khattab recited عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى then when he reached this Ayah وَفَـكِهَةً وَأَبّاً (And fruits **(Fakihah)** and herbage **(Abb).**) he said,
>
> > `We already know what **Al-Fakihah** is, but what is **Al-Abb?**'
>
> Then he said,
>
> > `By your life, O Ibn Al-Khattab, this is something over burdensome (i.e., unnecessary to ask about).'"

This report has an authentic chain of narration. More than one person has narrated it from Anas.

The meaning of the narration is that

> Umar wanted to know how it looks, its type and its exact description, because he (Umar) and everyone who reads this Ayah knows that it is one of the plants that grows from the earth.
>
> This is clear due to the Allah's saying,
>
> فَأَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبّاً
>
> وَعِنَباً وَقَضْباً
>
> وَزَيْتُوناً وَنَخْلاً
>
> وَحَدَآئِقَ غُلْباً
>
> وَفَـكِهَةً وَأَبّاً
>
> And We cause therein the **Habb** to grow. And grapes and **Qadb**, and olives and date palms. And **Ghulb Hada'iq**. And fruits **(Fakihah)** and herbage **(Abb).**

And then He says,

مَّتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ (٣٢)

A provision and benefit for you and your cattle.

meaning, a means of livelihood for you all and your cattle in this life until the (coming of) the Day of Judgement.

فَإِذَا جَآءَتِ الصَّآخَّةُ

80:33 Then when there comes As-Sakhkhah.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ

80:34 That Day shall a man flee from his brother.

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ

80:35 And from his mother and his father.

وَصَـحِبَتِهُ وَبَنِيهِ

80:36 And from his wife and his children.

لِكُلِّ امْرِىءٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ

80:37 Every man that Day will have enough to make him careless of others.

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ

80:38 Some faces that Day will be bright,

ضَـحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ

80:39 Laughing, rejoicing at good news.

وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ

80:40 And other faces that Day will be dust-stained.

تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ

80:41 Darkness will cover them.

أُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْكَفَرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ

80:42 Such will be the disbelieving, the wicked evil doers.)

The Day of Judgement and the fleeing of the People from Their Relatives during it

Allah warns;

فَإِذَا جَاءتِ الصَّاخَّةُ (٣٣)

Then when there comes **As-Sakhkhah**.

Ibn `Abbas said,

"**As-Sakhkhah** is one of the names of the Day of Judgement that Allah has magnified and warned His servants of.''

Ibn Jarir said,

"Perhaps it is a name for the blowing into Trumpet.''

Al-Baghawi said,

"**As-Sakhkhah** means the thunderous shout of the Day of Judgement. It has been called this because it will deafen the ears.

This means that it pierces the hearing to such an extent that it almost deafens the ears.''

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (٣٤)

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ (٣٥)

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ (٣٦)

That Day shall a man flee from his brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children.

> meaning, he will see them and then flee from them, and seek to get away from them because horror will be so great and the matter will be so weighty.

There is an authentic Hadith related concerning the intercession that states that every one of the great Messengers of firm resolve will be requested to intercede with Allah on behalf of the creation, but each of them will say,

"O myself!

O myself!

Today I will not ask You (O Allah) concerning anyone but myself.''

Even `Isa bin Maryam will say,

> "I will not ask Him (Allah) concerning anyone but myself today. I will not even ask Maryam, the woman who gave birth to me.''

Thus, Allah says,

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ

وَصَـحِبَتِهُ وَبَنِيهِ

That Day shall a man flee from his brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children.

Qatadah said,

> "The most beloved and then the next most beloved, and the closest of kin and then the next closest of kin -- due to the terror of that Day.''

Allah said,

لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ (٣٧)

Every man that Day will have enough to make him careless of others.

meaning, he will be preoccupied in his business and distracted from the affairs of others.

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded from Ibn Abbas that the Messenger of Allah said,

تُحْشَرُونَ حُفَاةً عُرَاةً مُشَاةً غُرْلًا

You will all be gathered barefoot, naked, walking and uncircumcised.

So his wife said, "O Messenger of Allah! Will we look at or see each other's nakedness''

The Prophet replied,

لِكُلِّ امْرِىءٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ أو قال: مَا أَشْغَلَهُ عَنِ النَّظَر

Every man among them on that Day will have enough (worries) to make him careless of others --

or he said: he will be too busy to look.

Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet said,

تُحْشَرُونَ حُفَاةً عُرَاةً غُرْلًا

You will all be gathered barefoot, naked and uncircumcised.

So a woman said, "Will we see or look at each others nakedness''

He replied,

يَا فُلَانَةُ، لِكُلِّ امْرِىءٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيه

O so-and-so woman! Every man among them on that Day will have enough (worries) to make him careless of others.

At-Tirmidhi said, "This Hadith is **Hasan Sahih**.''

The Faces of the People of Paradise and the People of the Fire on the Day of Judgement

Allah says;

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ (٣٨)

Some faces that Day will be bright **(Musfirah)**,

meaning, the people will be divided into two parties. There will be faces that are **Musfirah**, which means bright.

ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ (٣٩)

Laughing, rejoicing at good news.

meaning, happy and pleased due to the joy that will be in their hearts. The good news will be apparent on their faces. These will be the people of Paradise.

وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ (٤٠)

تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ (٤١)

And other faces that Day will be dust-stained. Darkness **(Qatarah)** will cover them.

meaning, they will be overcome and covered with **Qatarah**, which is darkness.

Ibn `Abbas said, **تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ**

"This means that they (the faces) will be overcome with darkness.''

Allah said,

أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَفَرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ (٤٢)

Such will be the disbelieving, the wicked evildoers.

meaning, they are disbelievers in their hearts, evildoers in their actions.

This is as Allah says,

وَلاَ يَلِدُوا۟ إِلاَّ فَاجِراً كَفَّاراً

And they will beget none but wicked disbelievers. (71:27)

This is the end of the Tafsir of Surah **`Abasa**, and to Allah all praise and thanks are due.